



COVENANT CHURCH

H O U S T O N

A Service of Worship for
Easter Sunday
5 April 2026

the green of Jesus
is breaking the ground
and the sweet
smell of delicious Jesus
is opening the house and
the dance of Jesus music
has hold of the air and
the world is turning
in the body of Jesus and
the future is possible

–Lucille Clifton, “spring song”

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ring in the hour

Silence is kept

*Prelude

Felice Anerio

“Alleluia Christus Surrexit”

(1560-1614)

Alleluja. Christus surrexit a mortuis primitiae dormientium.

Quoniam per hominem mors et per hominem resurrectio mortuorum.

Alleluia. Christ is risen from the dead, the firstfruits of them that slept.

For by man came death and by man came the resurrection of the dead.

Call to Worship

+Opening Hymn #469

Bunessan

“Morning Has Broken”

**Morning has broken like the first morning,
Blackbird has spoken like the first bird.
Praise for the singing! Praise for the morning!
Praise for them springing fresh from the Word!**

**Sweet the rain's new fall sunlit from heaven,
Like the first dewfall on the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness of the wet garden,
Sprung in completeness where God's feet pass.**

**Mine is the sunlight! Mine is the morning
Born of the one light Eden saw play!
Praise with elation, praise every morning,
God's re-creation of the new day!**

**Please hold silence and remain seated during the prelude*

+Please stand in body or spirit

+Opening Sentences

**Love, I thought, is stronger
than death or the fear of death.
Only by it, by love,
life holds together and advances.**

Missions Invitation

Invitation

Scripture Lesson

Matthew 28:1-10

These are our sacred stories.
Thanks be to God.

Time for Children

First Sunday Food Offering

+ Response:

Truro

**Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.
The cross stands empty to the sky.
Let streets and homes with praises ring.
Love, drowned in death, shall never die.**

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

**Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers
but to be fearless in facing them.
Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain
but for the heart to conquer it.
Let me not look for allies in life's battlefield
but to my own strength.
Let me not crave in anxious fear to be saved
but hope for the patience to win my freedom.**

+Please stand in body or spirit

**Grant that I may not be a coward,
feeling Your mercy in my success alone;
But let me find the grasp of Your hand in my failure.**

Words of Assurance

⁺Hymn #118

Lancashire

"The Day of Resurrection"

**The day of resurrection!
Earth, tell it out abroad;
The Passover of gladness,
The Passover of God.
From death to life eternal,
From this world unto the sky,
Our Christ hath brought us over
With hymns of victory.**

**Our hearts be pure from evil,
That we may see aright
The Lord in rays eternal
Of resurrection light;
And listening to His accents,
May hear, so calm and plain,
His own "All hail!" and, hearing,
May raise the victor strain.**

**Now let the heavens be joyful,
Let earth the song begin,
Let the round world keep triumph,
And all that is therein;
Let all things seen and unseen
Their notes of gladness blend,
For Christ the Lord is risen,
Our joy that hath no end.**

+Please stand in body or spirit

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

Music

George Frideric Handel

“Hallelujah!” from *Messiah*

(1685-1759)

Hallelujah: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

*The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ;
and he shall reign for ever and ever. King of Kings and Lord of Lords! Hallelujah!*

Prayer

Offering

Offertory

Shelby Griffin

“Be Thou My Vision”

(b. 2004)

On the first Sunday of each month, we give 100% of the cash offerings to one of the mission organizations that Covenant partners with on that Sunday. These funds will be above and beyond what Covenant has budgeted to give to Missions. Today's cash offerings will go to ChildBuilders. Its primary mission is to prevent the abuse and trauma that add to the development of mental illness in children.

+Prayer of Dedication

Leader: "Christ is risen, Alleluia!" cries out the chorus of creation.

People: "Christ is risen, Alleluia!" sing the supple winds of spring.

"Christ is risen, Alleluia!" ring out lilies in silent splendor.

Leader: The feast of feasts, the festival of hope,

the mother of all Sundays,

luminous in the full moon of spring, radiant in the rising of the sun.

People: Easter dances upon my rooftop

and plays like a newborn child in the cradle of my heart.

Leader: I rejoice like all of creation,

sailing on springtime's seed-bearing breezes,

and like the lily's trumpet, I open wide my throat and my heart

to join with all of heaven and earth

in singing out the symphony of joy at Easter's annual return.

+Please stand in body or spirit

**People: I take hope in Christ's victory over death,
hope that, one with him,
I will also have my Easter morning
when I will be freed from the prison,
the decaying dusty tomb,
of my narrow and stony spirit.**

Leader: I trust that I too will spring-like arise
to a fullness of living and loving,
to a life beyond all time and space,
to a life one with you, my God.

**People: "Christ is risen, Alleluia!"
I soon will be next,
Alleluia, Alleluia!**

⁺Doxology

Old Hundredth

**Praise God the Source of life and birth.
Praise God the Word, who came to earth.
Praise God the Spirit, holy flame,
All glory, honor to God's name! Amen.**

⁺Affirmation of Faith

**Resurrection is the refusal to be imprisoned any longer
by history and its long hatreds; it is the determination
to take the first step out of the tomb.
The logic of resurrection calls us to action.
If we say we believe in the resurrection
it only has meaning if we are people
who believe in the possibility
of transformed lives, transformed attitudes,
and transformed societies.
The action is the proof of the belief.
I can say I believe...because I see resurrections now,
see stones rolled away and new possibilities
rising from old attitudes.**

+Please stand in body or spirit

+Closing Hymn #105

Vruechten

“Because You Live, O Christ”

**Because You live, O Christ, the garden of the world has come to flower;
The darkness of the tomb is flooded with Your resurrection power.**

***Refrain:* The stone has rolled away and death cannot imprison!**

O sing this Easter Day, for Jesus Christ has risen, has risen, has risen, has risen!

**Because You live, O Christ, the spirit bird of hope is freed for flying;
Our cages of despair no longer keep us closed and life-denying. *Refrain.***

**Because You live, O Christ, the rainbow of Your peace will span creation,
The colors of Your love will draw all humankind to adoration. *Refrain.***

Benediction

+Postlude

“Toccata” from *Symphony No. 5*

Charles-Marie Widor
(1844-1937)

+Please stand in body or spirit

**Please hold silence and remain seated during the postlude*

Worship Notes

The worship leaders are **Marsha and Warren Holleman**.

The Call to Worship is “Resurrection” by Steve Garnaas-Holmes.

The Opening Sentences are by Ivan Turgenev.

The Unison Confession is by Rabindranath Tagore.

The Prayer of Dedication is “An Easter Psalm” from *Prayers for a Planetary Pilgrim* by Edward Hays.

The Affirmation of Faith is from *Doubts and Loves: What is Left of Christianity* by Richard Holloway.

The banners were created by **Nancy Henry**.

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About Today’s Service

The flowering cross is found in Christian art as early as the sixth century and is based on a legend that the cross itself burst into bloom at the moment that Jesus died. The legend describes how the wood of the cross came from a tree that sprang from a seed taken from the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden. Our flowering cross was made by **Jacy Grannis**. The flowers were prepared by **Nita Lindley** and **Linda Phenix**.

—*Laura Mayo*

Announcements

The Young Adults group will enjoy Christian and secular games at Board Game Night at 7pm in the Library on Friday, April 17.

Bring your pets and animal companions in body or spirit for a blessing as we celebrate Earth Day at a Blessing of the Animals on the labyrinth at 4pm on Saturday, April 18.

Our annual children- and youth-led worship service on Sunday, April 19 will recognize and celebrate our graduating students of all ages.

Committees will meet after church in Huff Fellowship Hall on April 26.

The Church-Wide Potluck will be hosted in homes across the city on Saturday, May 2 for those who sign up in the Narthex or online by April 19.

Calendar

Mon. April 6	7pm	Insight Meditation, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Thurs. April 9	10am	Community Group, Zoom.
	1:15pm	Lunctime Lectionary Lab, Zoom. (No Choir Rehearsal this week.)
Sat. April 11	8am	Art As Prayer, Huff Fellowship Hall.
Sun. April 12	9:30am	Adult Education, 2nd floor of Huff Fellowship Hall building or on Zoom.
	9:30am	Handbell Rehearsal, Huff Fellowship Hall.
	10:30am	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Sanctuary.

Information

Childcare is provided in the children's area beginning at 9:30 a.m. Children aged 2 and under are invited to the nursery. Children aged 3 to 9 are invited to the children's area after the Time for Children.

All-Gender Restrooms are located in the Huff Fellowship Hall building.

Covenant Recycles: If you do not wish to keep your order of worship, please recycle it by placing it on the stand located in the narthex.

Office Hours: The Church Office is open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 8am-3pm, and Tuesday from 1pm-5pm.

Helpful Links: Scan here for digital Visitor and Celebration & Concern Cards; any sign-up forms mentioned in the Announcements; and other useful information.



*Covenant Church affirms the sanctity, dignity, and equality
of human beings and the value of all life in the universe.
We welcome persons of all racial and ethnic heritages, all sexual orientations,
all gender identities, and all faith perspectives to our Christian community.
We stand for each individual's right to worship God and to respond
to God's call to ministry with a personal understanding
of God's all-encompassing love.
We value a holistic approach to faith and seek to worship in ways that are
intellectually credible, emotionally stimulating, spiritually engaging
and contemporarily relevant.
We value music and art and ritual to express what we cannot ever fully say.
We value participation so that we might hear many approaches
to our shared faith.*

Covenant Church, an ecumenical, liberal, Baptist congregation

Members of Covenant, Ministers

Fran Avera, Minister of Music, Emerita

Trena' Jamison, Children and Youth Coordinator

Heather Laureles, Director of Administration & Communication

David Lee, Director of Music

Laura Mayo, Senior Minister

Jason Steiner, Organist and Associate Director of Music

Raymond Stubblefield, Minister of Congregational Life

Brendon Young, Moores School of Music Artist in Residence

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Covenant Church recognizes the laws of the State of Texas and the rights of its citizens. Consistent with this acknowledgment and with respect for the values of our Church, we also acknowledge that our congregants and visitors seek a safe and comfortable space for worship and celebration. In that spirit, we request that all firearms be left in a secure place outside of the Church. We thank God for providing us with the opportunity to worship together and to continue to respect each other as human beings.